

Appl. No.: 10/719,661  
Filed: November 21, 2003  
Amdt. Dated 11/19/2004

Amendments to the Claims:

1. (Original) A method of interfacing between a first and a second computer system to process a request by a customer to return a good purchased from a merchant, said method comprising the steps of:

establishing an interface system that is capable of communicating with said first and second computer systems;

receiving at said interface system a customer return request from said first computer system;

applying one or more business rules to said customer return request to determine whether said request is authorized;

assembling a return service request based at least in part on said customer return request;

transmitting said return service request to said second computer system;

receiving at said interface system an image of a shipping label from said second computer system in response to said customer return request; and

providing said shipping label image to said first computer system.

2. (Original) The method of Claim 1, wherein said first computer system is associated with said merchant.

3. (Original) The method of Claim 2, wherein said second computer system is associated with a commercial carrier.

4. (Original) The method of Claim 1, wherein said interface system communicates with said first and second computer systems via a computer network.

5. (Original) The method of Claim 1, wherein said interface system communicates with said first and second computer systems via the Internet.

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6. (Original) The method of Claim 1, wherein the step of applying one or more business rules to said customer return request further comprises the step of using said one or more business rules to associate a return destination address to said return request.

7. (Original) The method of Claim 6, wherein the step of using said one or more business rules to associate a return destination address to said return request occurs only if said return request is authorized.

8. (Original) The method of Claim 1, wherein the step of assembling a return service request occurs only if said return request is authorized pursuant to said one or more business rules.

9. (Original) The method of Claim 1, further including the step of reformatting said shipping label image as an approximately four inch by six inch shipping label.

10. (Original) The method of Claim 1, wherein assembling a return service request comprises assembling said return service request as an XML document.

11. (Original) The method of Claim 1, further comprising the step of transmitting said shipping label image from said first computer system to said customer.

12. (Original) The method of Claim 1, further comprising the step of delivering said shipping label image to said customer.

13. (Original) The method of Claim 12, wherein the step of delivering said shipping label image to said customer comprises delivering said shipping label image to said customer via electronic mail.

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14. (Original) A method of interfacing between a first and a second computer system to process a request by a customer to return a good purchased from a merchant, said method comprising the steps of:

establishing an interface system that is capable of communicating with said first and second computer systems;  
receiving at said interface system, returns data relating to a customer return transaction;  
assembling a return service request based at least in part on said returns data;  
transmitting said return service request to said second computer;  
receiving at said interface system, an image of a shipping label from said second computer system in response to said return service request; and  
providing electronically said shipping label image to said first computer.

15. (Original) The method of Claim 14, wherein the step of transmitting said return service request to said second computer comprises transmitting said return service request via an XML feed.

16. (Original) The method of Claim 14, further comprising the step of updating a returns transaction database with said returns data.

17. (Original) The method of Claim 14, further comprising the step of updating a returns transaction database with information from said return service request.

18. (Original) The method of Claim 14, wherein said shipping label image includes a package tracking number and said package tracking number is stored in a returns transaction database.

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19. (Original) A method of interfacing between a plurality of merchant computer system and at least one carrier computer system to process customer requests to return goods purchased from one of said plurality of merchants, said method comprising the steps of:

establishing an interface system that is capable of communicating with said plurality of merchant computer systems and said at least one carrier computer systems;

receiving, at said interface system, a customer return request sent by one of said plurality of merchant computer systems; said customer return request including a merchant identifier;

querying a merchant database with at least said merchant identifier to obtain one or more business rules associated with said customer return request;

applying said one or more business rules to said customer return request to determine whether to process said request and to associate a return destination address with said customer return request;

assembling a return service request based at least in part on said customer return request;

transmitting said return service request to said at least one carrier computer system;

receiving, at said interface system, an image of a shipping label from said at least one carrier computer system; and

providing said shipping label image to said one of said plurality of merchant computer systems that sent said customer return request.

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20. (New) A computer system for interfacing between a merchant computer system and a carrier computer system to process customer requests to return goods purchased from said merchant, said computer system comprising:

a database for storing information related to the purchase of said goods by said customers from said merchant; and

a processor capable of communicating with said database, said processor configured for:  
establishing an interface system capable of facilitating communication with said merchant and said carrier computer systems via a computer network;

receiving at said interface system a customer return request from said merchant computer system;

querying said database to obtain one or more returns rules associated with said customer return request;

applying said one or more returns rules to said customer return request to determine whether said request is authorized;

assembling a return service request based at least in part on said customer return request;

transmitting said return service request to said carrier computer system;

receiving at said interface system an image of a shipping label from said carrier computer system in response to said return service request; and

providing said shipping label image to said merchant computer system.

21. (New) The system of Claim 20, wherein the step of applying one or more returns rules to said customer return request further comprises the step of using said one or more returns rules to associate a return destination address to said return request.

22. (New) The system of Claim 21, wherein the step of using said one or more returns rules to associate a return destination address to said return request occurs only if said processor determines that said return request is authorized.

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23. (New) The system of Claim 20, wherein the step of assembling a return service request occurs only if said processor determines that said return request is authorized pursuant to said one or more returns rules.

24. (New) The system of Claim 20, wherein said processor is further configured for reformatting said shipping label image as an approximately four inch by six inch shipping label.

25. (New) The system of Claim 20, wherein the step of assembling said return service request comprises assembling said return service request as an XML document.

26. (New) The system of Claim 20, wherein said processor is further configured for transmitting said shipping label image to said customer via electronic email.

27. (New) The system of Claim 20, wherein said processor is further configured for updating said database with one or more items of information included in said return service request.

28. (New) The system of Claim 20, wherein said shipping label image includes a package tracking number and said processor is further configured for storing said package tracking number in said database.

29. (New) The system of Claim 20, wherein said computer network includes the Internet.

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30. (New) A computer system for interfacing between a plurality of merchant computer systems and at least one carrier computer system to process customer requests to return goods purchased from one of said plurality of merchants, said computer system comprising:

a database for storing information related to the purchase of said goods by said customers from said merchants; and

a processor capable of communicating with said database, said processor configured for:

establishing an interface system capable of facilitating communication with said plurality of merchant computer systems and said at least one carrier computer system via a computer network;

receiving, at said interface system, a customer return request sent by one of said plurality of merchant computer systems, said customer return request including a merchant identifier;

querying said database with at least said merchant identifier to obtain one or more returns rules associated with said customer return request;

applying said one or more returns rules to said customer return request to determine whether to process said request and to associate a return destination address with said customer return request;

assembling a return service request based at least in part on said customer return request;

transmitting said return service request to said at least one carrier computer system;

receiving, at said interface system, an image of a shipping label from said at least one carrier computer system; and

providing said shipping label image to said one of said plurality of merchant computer systems that sent said customer return request.